How Brummies Have Shaped the City

Posted on Tuesday 10th March 2009

The University of Birmingham is launching a new way of telling Brummies about its research on the city. A special web site unveiled today, is dedicated to telling stories about Birmingham – on Longbridge, new Brummies, and how citizens have made a difference to the city.

The **website (http://www.birmingham.bham.ac.uk/)** presents a summary of the university's research. Today, the public has an opportunity to hear at first hand from the researchers behind the stories.

Birmingham's innovation is part of the ESRC Festival of Social Science, a national event in which Universities provide a fascinating insight into some of the country's leading social science research and how it influences our social, economic and political lives - both now and in the future

Prof Chris Skelcher, who co-ordinates the project at the University said: "The web-site and event will provide the public with new insights into research at the University of Birmingham and by social scientists generally. It forms part of a wider initiative by the University to use the internet to make its research more accessible."

The website will explore three stories. Dr Carolyn Chapain and Professor David Bailey talk about the story of Longbridge. They look at how community spirit has helped the people of Longbridge to recover from the closure of 'the Austin' – the Rover car plant. They will talk about how they have documented the response by local people, the city council and others to the plant closure, and how this can help other communities to minimise the impact of such major changes.

Dr. Jenny Phillimore talks about her research with people who have come to Birmingham to escape hardship and persecution, and have made new lives here. Birmingham was made by migrants, who turned the original small village into a major city. She tells the story of the most recent group of 'new Brummies'.

Dr Andy Green will talk about the City's archives that reveal stories about how ordinary people have lived their lives and contributed to the city. This involved the University working with people in local libraries, and together creating a richer understanding about Brummies of all types.

Prof Skelcher said: "Social science research is so relevant to the communities we all live and work amongst and it's vital we transfer that knowledge and experience to the wider public. These stories help us understand more about the city we live in and the people who live here. They also show how social scientists go about their work, and why they are interested in listening to people tell their own stories."

The Festival is an annual, weeklong programme of events held across the UK.

The launch event will be held at the Library Theatre at the Central Library, from 12.30 – 1.30 on Friday 13th March 2009. Entry is free.

Ends

Further Media Information

All the academics involved in the research are available for interview. For all media enquiries please contact Anna Mitchell in the Press Office on 0121 414 6029 / 07920 593946

Notes to Editors:

For further information on some of the stories featured visit:

1. Longbridge: The story of a community responding to the closure of a major employer (contact: Caroline Chapin, CURS)

http://www.business.bham.ac.uk/news/2007/demiseofrover.shtml

http://www.curs.bham.ac.uk/research_consultancy/economicdevelopment/Longbridge.shtml

2. Hidden histories of Birmingham citizens (contact: Ian Grosvenor, education)

AHRC (http://http//www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundedResearch/Pages/ResearchDetail.aspx?id=128630), **Connecting Histories (http://www.connectinghistories.org.uk/birminghamstories.asp)**

3. New Brummies - recent arrivals: refugees and asylum seekers (contact: **Jenny Phillimore (http://www.iass.bham.ac.uk/staff/phillimore.shtml)**, IASS)

4. Recreating and renewing Birmingham's heritage - Handsworth Park (contact: Robert Dalziel, **INLOGOV (http://www.inlogov.bham.ac.uk/research/public_space.shtml)**)

Timetable for Festival events

For more information on the Festival visit the **website (http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/FSS/)**:

6 March Start of ESRC Festival of Social Science. Portal goes live. Media coverage to promote portal and event on 13th.

13 March, 12.30 – 1.45 Open workshop for general public, Library Theatre, Birmingham Central Library, Chamberlain Square.

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